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G, FR
SUBJECT: FRENCH PRESIDENCY'S GYMNICH PREVIEW:
TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS, DRC

REF: SECSTATE 115017

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Kathleen Allegrone for reasons 1.4 b and d.

(C) The November 3 Gymnich informal meeting of EU Foreign Ministers will remain dedicated to transatlantic relations, according to the French MFA's Deputy Head for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Mathieu Carmona on October 31. Although other informal reports have suggested the ministers may instead need to focus on last-minute concerns related to the same day's Union for the Mediterranean/Barcelona Process Foreign Ministers' meeting, Carmona assured us the brief Gymnich timeframe will be devoted to wrapping up the EU's discussion paper on transatlantic relations, a time-sensitive exercise due to next week's U.S. elections. Carmona said the Democratic Republic of the Congo will likely be added as a brief Gymnich agenda item due to the unfolding crisis situation. (Note: French FM Kouchner and UK FM Miliband are traveling to the DRC today.) Carmona also advised that reftel's other points will be discussed at the November 10-11 General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) meeting, and agreed to provide commentary on those issues shortly before that meeting.

STAPLETON